Samson, strong man

Judges 13:1-16:31
The old Judge died and the Israelites forgot God and all He had done for them. God let the Philistines rule over them for 40 years.

One day an Angel of the Lord appeared to Eshtaol, a woman with no children, from the tribe of Dan. “You will have a son. Make sure you do not drink wine or eat anything unclean. Never cut his hair for he will be a Narizite and will deliver his people from the Philistines.”

The woman ran and told everything to her husband, Manoah. “Lord, please send the man back to us, to teach us how to bring up the boy,” prayed Manoah.

Again the angel appeared. She ran and brought her husband, and he told them all he had said before, telling them to bring him up to love God.
When Samson had grown to a young man, he demanded his parents arrange his marriage to a Phlistine woman. They tried to change his mind, but he was determined to marry her.

While going to the wedding he came across the body of a lion he had killed earlier when it attacked him. Samson found a bee’s nest in it and took honey from the next eating it, and when he arrived at the wedding, he gave some to his parents.

At the wedding he challenged 30 of the Philistines to a riddle game. “If you win, I will give you 30 sets of clothes, if not you give me some. Out of the eater, something to eat; out of the strong, something sweet.”
The men he had made the bet with tried and tried to guess it, but they had no idea. Finally they went to Samson’s wife and threatened her if she didn’t learn the answer for them.

“Samson, you don’t trust me. Why haven’t you told me the answer?” she cried. She kept crying and nagging him until finally he told her the answer.

She ran to tell the men and when they told Samson the answer he went to another town and killed 30 men, taking their clothes to repay the bet.
Eventually after Samson’s temper had cooled he went back to his wife and started to go in to her.

“Wait,” said his father-in-law, “You just left her, so I assumed you didn’t want to marry her anymore. Now she’s married to someone else.”

Samson stood there in awe, and then turned around and came up with a plan. He caught 300 foxes and tied their tails together. Between each tail he put a burning torch, and then he set them loose in the wheat fields of the Philistines.

The Philistines then killed his wife and her family in revenge. Samson came down out of the hills and killed all the men he could find in the village.
The Philistines were tired of this one man causing them so much trouble, so they surrounded the area Samson was in and demanded he be handed over. The men of Judah tied up Samson to save themselves and Samson was given over.

But, just as the Philistines took Samson, the Spirit of God came over him and he grabbed the jawbone of a donkey.

That day he killed one thousand Philistines, then he fell to the ground thirsty, praying to God, “You have given me a great victory, must I die of thirst?”

God opened up the ground and small pool filled with water and Samson drank it.
Many years later Samson saw a girl he thought was gorgeous over in Gaza, another Philistine girl. He went in and fell asleep at her house. While he was there the Philistines locked the city gates meaning to capture him in the morning.

But, Samson got up in the middle of the night and went to the gates. He tore the gates out of their posts and carried the 400 pounds of gates across the mountain to Hebron.

The Philistines were livid, but knew they could not defeat him while he was so strong. Finally, they came up with a plan.

They went to Delilah, another woman Samson liked, and promised her a lot of money to find out his weakness.
So, she started asking, “Samson, why are you so strong? How can I make you weak?” She kept asking and asking, and asking.

Finally, he couldn’t take it anymore, so he lied. “If anyone tied me with 7 brand new bowstrings, I will be weak.”

When he fell asleep she tied him up and then yelled. “The Philistines are here!” Samson woke up and defeated them easily.

“You tricked me!” Delilah said with a stamp of her foot. “Tell me true, how can you be tied?”

“If anyone ties me with new ropes, I will be weak,” he replied. Again while he was asleep she tied him up.

“The Philistines are here!” she yelled. Again Samson defeated them all.
“You are hurting my feelings!” Delilah complained. “Please tell me how to bind you.”

“If you weave my hair into a loom, I will be weak,” Samson replied. But, when he woke up he broke the loom and again defeated the men she had called.

“Stop lying to me. You don’t love me,” cried Delilah. “How can you ask me to love you when you keep secrets from me?”

Finally Samson sighed at her, “I have never cut my hair, if I was shaved I would be just like any other man.”

While he slept she shaved his head and then called out to him, “The Philistines are here!”

He leapt up to defeat them, but God had left him, and the tied him up.
They led the bound Samson to a mill and there they blinded him and set him to working in a mill.

Daily they led him to the lever and every day he walked around in circles grinding grain for his enemies.

Years passed and he continued to do the job of animals.
After many years the Philistines gathered to celebrate their continued rule over the Israelites and to worship their god who had delivered even the great Samson into their hands.

A small boy led Samson into their temple. The Philistines laughed and jeered at Samson. They asked him to dance and threw things at him.

“Lead me over to the pillars boy, so I can rest.” Then he prayed to God. “Please remember me, please strengthen me one more time, so I can get revenge for my eyes.”

Samson pushed as hard as he could on the pillars and brought down the whole temple.

He killed more people in his death than he had in his life.
Questions

Younger Kids
1. How did Samson break the vow made for him when he was born?
2. What happened when Samson lost his temper? Do you ever lose your temper?
3. Did Samson thank God for his strength?
4. God gave Samson many gifts, what gifts has God given you to use?

Middle Kids
1. Do you think Samson’s parents raised him to follow God? How would you defend your answer?
3. Read Judges 14:16. Why did Samson tell her the answer? Did she ask him once? How is this like temptations in our lives? Can we resist one time and defeat sin?
4. What do you think are Samson’s biggest weaknesses? What are your weaknesses? What can you do to avoid problems?
5. Read Judges 15:18-19. Samson has been fighting for a long time, and he finally prays. What does he ask God for? Is God with us even when we are not following Him?

Older Guys
1. Read Judges 13:3-8. How did Eshtaol react to the news of a child? How did Manoah react to the news?
2. Read Judges 13:8. What does Manoah’s prayer teach us about following what we believe God’s plan is for us?
4. When the Philistines decide they need to break Samson they come up with a plan. What is it? Read Judges 16:4-6. Do they give up after one attempt, read Judges 16:10-18. How many tries did it take? Can we resist sin one time and defeat it?
5. Read Judges 16:28-30. Do you think Samson recognized his need for God?
Activities
1. Look at a map of Israel from the time of the Judges. Where is Gaza, and where is Hebron? How far did he climb? Here is a map: http://www.biblestudy.org/maps/large-map-land-of-palestine-at-time-of-judges.html
2. Be your own strong man. Try feats of strength, who can lift the most?
3. Make a Samson wig out of construction paper. Here’s a fun example if you need inspiration: http://craftingthewordofgod.com/2014/02/11/samsons-hair/

Online